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## ILLINOIS/FRIDAY

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# Cleanup To Start At Site In Sauget

By Robert Goodrich  
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

Cerro Copper Products Co. will spend up to \$12 million to clean up one section of Dead Creek in Sauget under an agreement reached Thursday with Illinois Attorney General Neil F. Hartigan.

Nearly a century of industrial waste has turned Dead Creek into a "chemical soup" that includes acids, cyanide and PCBs, making it one of the most toxic waste sites in Illinois.

Although the creek is less than three miles long, it comprises all or parts of 200 parcels of land scattered through Sauget and Cahokia. Hartigan said ownership of some tracts has been difficult to determine, let alone responsibility for contamination.

Paul Tandler, vice president of Cerro, said his company would fill and then remove the contaminated sediment from 1,600 feet of the creek that runs through the company's property. Up to 20,000 cubic yards of polluted dirt will be removed and replaced with clean soil, he said.

Hartigan said he is negotiating with industries, including Monsanto Co., to get three other stretches of the creek cleaned up.

The agreement with Cerro Copper was formalized in a consent decree filed Thursday in U.S. District Court in East St. Louis.

Hartigan said it calls for work to start in 30 days and be complete by the end of October. The decree includes a penalty of \$500 a day for any delay.

Tandler said Cerro Copper had discovered that storms caused industrial waste water to back up into Dead Creek. He said his company had built a tunnel along the creek that empties into a storage basin on the north end. The tunnel and basin can hold 1.5 million gallons.

"We recognized that there was a problem with Dead Creek, and that over the years we may have been one of many companies that contributed to that problem," Tandler said.

He said his company was under no obligation or pressure but, "As a responsible corporate citizen, we decided to step forward and take the lead on this project."

Hartigan said he hoped Cerro Copper's lead would be followed by other industries. He said Cerro Copper could sue other owners who were partly responsible for polluting the creek to help pay its costs.

He said no one yet knows how much it will cost to clean up all of Dead Creek. His office and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency are



Neil F. Hartigan  
Illinois attorney general

working to obtain federal Superfund money for the work, he said.

Cerro Copper was established in 1927 and is the world's biggest producer of copper tubing. It employs 850 people in Sauget.

Tandler said his company had been a pioneer in recycling. He said it had recycled 6 billion pounds of copper.

# Cerro Copper to use \$12 million on cleanup

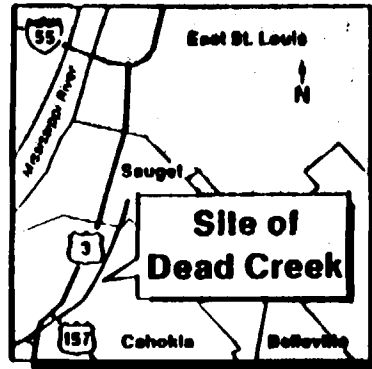
By KEITH BRUMLEY  
News-Democrat

SAUGET — Illinois Attorney General Neil Hartigan said Thursday that Cerro Copper Products Co. will spend \$12 million to clean up part of the Dead Creek toxic waste site.

U.S. District Judge William Stiehl on Thursday approved a consent decree between Cerro and Illinois that holds Cerro responsible for completing a cleanup of about 1,600 feet of Dead Creek that is on company property. Stormwater that accumulated in the creek bed after heavy rains already has been diverted. Cerro will remove 20,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil and will fill in the creek bed. The \$12 million price tag includes Cerro's share of the cost of a state investigation into the extent of contamination in Dead Creek.

Dead Creek is a mostly dry creek bed that runs through Sauget and Cahokia. Industries over several decades diverted waste from manufacturing into Dead Creek that contained a variety of industrial by-products, including cancer-causing polychlorinated biphenyls and heavy metals.

Hartigan on Thursday called



Dead Creek "the most toxic waste site in Illinois" and said Illinois still is trying to get Dead Creek added to the Superfund cleanup list, which would make federal money available for a cleanup.

Hartigan said the state is negotiating with other companies, which he did not name, and said three more cleanup agreements are in the offing. Cerro has until year's end to finish its part of the cleanup. Hartigan did not give a timetable or a cost estimate for a cleanup of the various Dead Creek sites.

Hartigan said on the eve of his first term in 1983 that a Dead Creek

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News-Democrat/Dale Siebenberger

Hartigan and Cerro Vice President Paul Tandler look at creek

## Cleanup

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cleanup would be a top priority of his administration. A state study of Dead Creek contamination took two years and cost \$1.3 million.

He praised Cerro for entering into the agreement without coercion and for acting quickly to study the type and extent of contamination on Cerro property and for starting a cleanup.

"Cerro Corp. is providing \$12 million to initiate a cleanup of Dead

Creek, widely regarded as the most toxic waste site in Illinois. It's our hope that other property owners in this area and those who have contributed to the contamination will follow suit," Hartigan said.

"We realize there was a problem with Dead Creek and that over the years, we may have been one of the corporations that contributed to the problem," said Cerro Vice President Paul Tandler.

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## Cerro will contribute \$12 million to cleanup

Cerro Copper Products Co. of Sauget is the first industry along Dead Creek to reach a settlement with the state on cleaning up the polluted stream.

Illinois Attorney General Neil Hartigan said Thursday that Cerro has agreed to spend \$12 million to clean up about 1,600 feet of the creek that is on company property.

Cerro has already diverted stormwater from that area of the creek, and plans to remove 20,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil.

Negotiations are continuing with other companies located along the creek, including Monsanto, and according to Hartigan, other agreements may soon be reached.

According to Illinois Environmental Protection Agency studies of the creek, industries over

almost a century of development have dumped a variety of pollutants into it, including cancer-causing dioxin, polychlorinated biphenyls and heavy metals. Some of the offenders no longer exist.

Cerro officials said they recognized there was a problem with pollutants in the creek and that over the years their company may have contributed to the problem. Part of the \$12 million Cerro has agreed to pay, will cover its share of the cost of the state investigation.

Dead Creek, which runs through Sauget and Cahokia, "is the most toxic waste site in Illinois," according to Hartigan. The state is still trying to get the site on the Superfund Cleanup List so it would qualify for federal funds.

## Cerro to clean up polluted waterway

By MARTIN FARRICKER

NEW YORK—Cerro Copper Products Co. will clean up a contaminated creek located at the site of the company's Sauget, Ill., copper tubing plant at a cost of more than \$12 million.

Neil F. Hartigan, Illinois attorney general, reportedly commended the producer for initiating the cleanup of the waterway—known as Dead Creek—without litigation. Dead Creek was polluted by years of industrial waste from manufacturing companies in the Sauget area, according to Cerro president Henry L. Schweich.

Schweich said the company agreed to finance the cleanup because the contaminated creek segment was on Cerro's property.

"We recognized that there was a problem with Dead Creek and that over the years we may have been one of the many companies that contributed to that problem," Schweich said. "We decided to step forward and take the lead on this project."

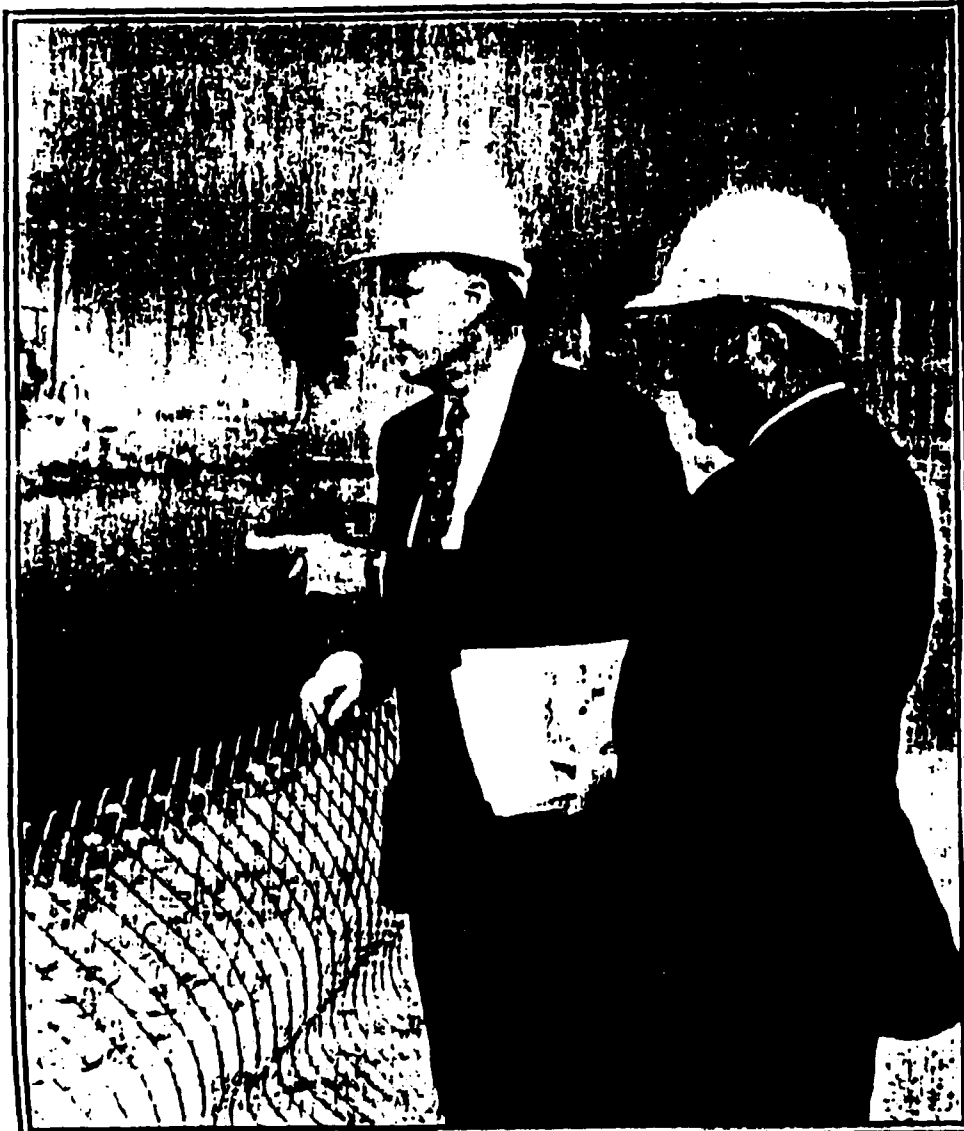
The cleanup action is outlined in a consent decree signed by representatives of Hartigan's office and Cerro that has been filed in U.S. District Court in

East St. Louis, Ill. The consent decree was agreed upon by Cerro, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and Hartigan's office to assure that verbal agreements would be binding on all parties involved.

As part of the agreement, Cerro will stop all discharge flows into the 1,600-foot creek segment crossing its property, construct an alternate storm water collection and retention system and remove contaminated sediment from the creek bed.

According to the plan, the firm will remove 20,000 cubic yards of sediment from the creek bed. After a dewatering process, about 10,000 cubic yards of sediment will be taken to a permitted landfill, Schweich said. The creek bed then will be filled with clean soil.

Schweich expects the entire project to be completed later this year. He said the cleanup will have no effect on production or employment at the plant.



Paul Tandler, right, vice president of Cerro Copper Products Co., and Illinois Attorney General Neil Hartigan examine Dead Creek in Sauget.

## Dead Creek cleanup could cost Cerro Co. \$12 million

Cerro Copper Products Co. has signed a consent decree agreeing to clean up Dead Creek in Sauget, Ill.

The cleanup could cost as much as \$12 million.

According to the document filed in U.S. District Court in East St. Louis, Cerro has agreed to stop all flows into the 1,600-foot creek segment which is on its property, construct an alternate storm water collection and retention system and remove the contaminated sediment from the creek bed.

"We recognized that there was a problem with Dead Creek, and that over the years we may have been one of many companies that contributed to that problem," said Paul Tandler, Cerro's vice president, at a news conference earlier this month in Sauget. Also attending the news conference was Illinois Attorney General Neil Hartigan.

Cerro's Sauget facility is the largest of its kind in the world. Established in 1927, the plant employs 850 people. It recycles copper scrap, produces Grade 1 copper cathodes and manufactures copper redraw tube and finished copper tube for general-purpose plumbing applications.

Cerro previously announced plans for a \$20 million investment in environmental controls and production improvements at the Sauget plant.

The portion of Dead Creek affected by the consent decree became part of Cerro's property in the 1950s and 1960s when the company purchased land on the east side of the creek.

Cerro's analysis showed that during heavy rainstorms industrial waste water from the sewer system would back into Dead Creek,

### Cerro presented award for waste reduction, recycling

Illinois Gov. James Thompson has awarded Sauget-based, Cerro Copper Products Co. the Certificate of Recognition for its efforts in solid waste reduction and recycling.

This is the second year in a row Cerro has received the award.

The award, part of the Governor's Corporate Recycling Award competition, is given annually to companies that make a significant contribution to the reduction of waste, recycling of waste or use of recycled waste.

Cerro Copper qualified in the recycling and use of recycled waste categories.

Cerro Copper has been in business for 70 years.

The awards are given in accordance with the Waste Management Act — aimed at reducing Illinois' dependence upon landfills.

turning it into a surge basin, according to Tandler. The company's analysis also revealed the presence of PCBs and other contaminants in the creek-bed sediments.

The company plans to build a \$30 million copper-tube mill in Shelby, Mo., where it fabricates and finishes copper tube for air conditioning, refrigeration and other heating/cooling equipment. The Shelby plant employs 150 workers.

# King: Governor reneged on clean creek promise

By Steve Horrell  
Staff writer

CAHOKIA — The fallout from Cerro Copper Product Co.'s promise to clean up Dead Creek continued last week when Mayor Mike King returned from a summer vacation.

King echoed Village Planner Paul McNamara that the plan does little for Cahokia because the cleanup will take place in Sauget.

When Attorney General Neil Hartigan made the much-publicized announcement July 5 that Cerro Copper Products Co. would spend \$12 million for the cleanup of a 1,600-foot stretch of Dead Creek, Cahokia Village Planner Paul McNamara pointed to a pledge several years ago by Gov. James Thompson to clean up Cahokia's section of the creek.

King continued Wednesday where McNamara left off.

"In the mid-1980s, Gov. Jim Thompson offered me his hand in promise that he would clean up Dead Creek in 18 months — no longer than two years," King said.

King accused the governor of offering false hope to the residents. "If you can't keep your promise, the least you can do is tell people you can't clean it up, and why."

Keri Luli, who is in charge of the cleanup for the IEPA, was on vacation and could not be reached for comment last week. Thompson also was unavailable for comment.

Studies have shown that Dead Creek is the most toxic waste site in the state, with high levels of PCBs, acids and cyanides, Hartigan said at the news conference. The cleanup next month

involves only the section that runs through Cerro Copper. The three-mile-long creek starts on Cerro property and flows between Queeny Avenue and Judith Lane in Cahokia, and runs through the Wedge area, at the intersection of Illinois 3 and 157.

"I've been on the EPA for years and years," said Walter Allen, whose house at 101 Walnut St. borders on a body of water he calls Dead Pond, which is fed on the west side by Dead Creek.

Allen, 80, and his wife, Theresa, have lived there for 35 years, using a pump to pull water from the pond to irrigate cauliflower, cabbage, sweet potatoes and a garden full of other organically grown vegetables. "They ought to pump that thing (the creek) out and fill it over with dirt."

King accused Hartigan of  
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## •Creek

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playing "political football" with the Dead Creek issue in order to further his gubernatorial campaign against Republican Jim Edgar. Dead Creek won't be clean, King said, until the entire creek — not simply Sauget — is cleaned up.

"They think if you cut off the arm, the rest of the monster is going to die," King said.

One goal of the village, in lieu of a more thorough cleanup, is to dredge the creek of debris that residents have thrown in over the years and get the stagnant water moving again.

"With \$12 million we could clean out every street and drainage ditch in the area," King said.

## IEPA welcomes Cerro decision on waste removal

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) has welcomed the recent announcement by Cerro Copper Products Company of Sauget that the company has agreed to remove contaminated materials from a section of Dead Creek identified as "Creek Segment A."

The removal action, scheduled to begin in mid-August, is the result of negotiations between IEPA, the Illinois Office of the Attorney General and Cerro Copper.

"The Agency is pleased to see Cerro Copper take a corporate leadership role in addressing the hazardous waste problems in the Dead Creek area of Sauget and Cahokia," said Bernard P. Killian, IEPA director. "IEPA and area residents have long been concerned about potential environmental and public health effects related to industrial waste disposal practices of the past."

The Consent Agreement signed by the state and the company calls for the removal of approximately 20,000 cubic yards of contaminated creek sediment from the segment of Dead Creek (Creek Segment A) located within Cerro Copper's property boundaries.

The creek segment is contaminated with heavy metals (cadmium, mercury, barium, etc.), volatile organic chemicals and low levels of PCBs contributed by decades of industrial discharge, sewer discharge and area run-off.

Removal and dewatering of creek contamination will be overseen by IEPA personnel. The waste material must be sent to an approved, permitted landfill. The excavated area must then be backfilled with clean soil and properly graded to direct stormwater toward the Queeny Avenue stormsewer.

IEPA considers the Creek

Segment A project to be an important first step in the search for solutions to the entire area's contamination problems. The second step would be a successful conclusion to current negotiations with other local industries to remediate seven more sites, Killian said.

The Agency performed a \$1.3 million expanded site investigation of the Sauget Sites area in preparation for the third step, proving to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that the project qualifies for the National Priorities List (NPL) of federal Superfund sites. No new sites are being accepted by until a revised NPL scoring system is put in place to determine qualified sites.

Once placed on the NPL, the state and federal EPAs would have both federal funding to undertake cleanup activities and federal Justice Department support in taking enforcement

action against responsible parties for recovery of federal remedial funds. Such action is a vital part of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator William Reilly's new long term

strategy for improvement of the Superfund program, a spokesman said. The agency can recover three times its costs from responsible parties who fail to take proper remedial action, he said.

Citizens and local officials who wish to know more about the Cerro project are welcome to review the Site Investigation/Feasibility Study for Creek Segment A report at the Cahokia Public Library or the Sauget Village Clerk's Office.

Questions about the Sauget Sites project or federal Superfund program should be directed to Keri Luly at 217/782-5562 or Paul Takacs at 217/782-6760.